Overview of Nigeria’s R & D Plan for Lassa fever

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Introduction

• 50 years since discovery of Lassa virus in Nigeria, still many unanswered questions

• Clearly an urgent need to conduct planned research during outbreaks to generate information to guide public health response

• Nigeria set out to develop a coherent set of national research priorities during LF outbreaks
Based on the WHO R & D Blueprint

Objectives are to:

- Set in place a mechanism in Nigeria to facilitate the coordination of all research efforts related to Lassa fever
  - Prioritize & facilitate multiple local & international partner requests based on local needs
- Provide answers to unanswered questions & increase knowledge about the disease
- Expand existing research capacity in Nigeria
Goal is to improve the following

• Adequate information about transmission
• Diagnostics
• Therapeutics
• Preventives
• Engagement with communities and effective risk communication
• Better infection prevention measures
• Identify and protect high risk groups
The Nigeria National LF Research Plan

Covers 3 Areas of Work

1. Prevention
2. Detection
3. Response & Preparedness

• Other mechanisms to improve the research environment for Lassa Fever & others
Overview of the plan

• Retrospective data analyses
• Observational studies
• Surveys
• Clinical trials
• Anthropologic studies
• Lab based Assay evaluations (diagnostics)
• Clinical trials – therapeutics, preventives
Questions to be answered by the LF NRP

• What are factors driving transmission within the community? – to strengthen risk communication
• What are the behavioural risk factors associated with rodent-human transmission?
• What are the ecological factors associated with rodent-human transmission?
• What are effective approaches/interventions for reducing risk of transmission?
  – How can they be evaluated effectively
Questions to be answered by the LF NRP

• What are the circulating strains in different parts of the country
• Surveillance for possible new evolving new strains or new virulent mechanisms
• Differential diagnosis for LF disease
• Evaluation of new diagnostics so standardized lab tests are available to support research and response efforts
• Strengthening of surveillance methods
Response & Preparedness

Questions to be answered by the LF NRP

• What are the predictors of survival/mortality with Lf disease?
• What are the clinical and laboratory indicators of severity of disease?
• What are the components of preferred standard of care
• Efficacy trials for available/candidate therapeutics & preventives
What has been done so far

• NRP – LF was refined in collaboration with WHO & other stakeholders – July 2018

• Observational cohort study of Lassa fever clinical Course and Prognostic factors in an Epidemic (LASCOPE) context in Nigeria currently ongoing at FMC Owo – 2018

• Discussion on formation of Consortium for research coordination at the 3 major LF treatment centres

• NCDC In-house research proposal development workshop in September 2018

• Guideline development for time sensitive review of protocols including those of interventional products
Other mechanisms in progress

• Assessment of the 3 major treatment centres to provide minimum requirements for treatment of LF/VHF

• Finalising Consortium for research coordination at the 3 major LF treatment centres, others to join in phases

• Involvement of NFELTP residents/grads in LF research

• Harmonisation of data collection tools

• Finalisation of harmonised treatment guideline review

• Implementation of plan for longer term storage of samples to enable exploration of research questions

• Plan for GCP training November 2018
Discussions